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MONTHLY

MAY 1953



UNIVERSITY OF  
COLUMBIA  
- 1953

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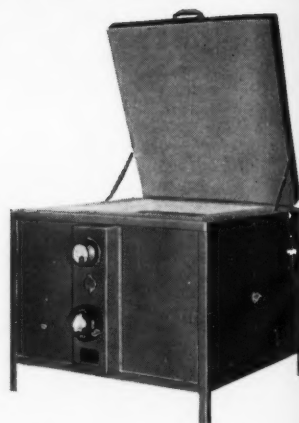
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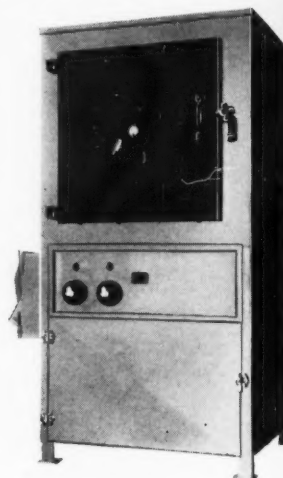
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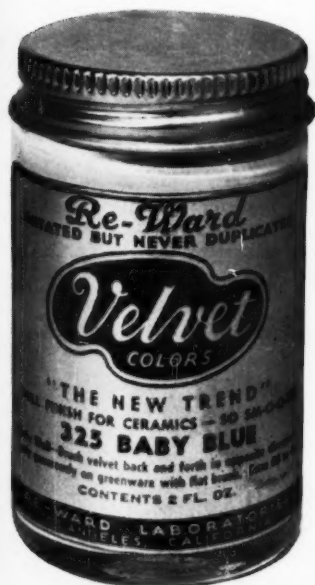
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The Edward ORTON, Jr.  
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## letters

### That Missing January Number

Gentlemen:

A friend loaned me the January issue of your new magazine—what a marvelous experience!! Thank you . . . I feel terrible, though, that I did not learn of its existence 'till it was too late to beg, borrow, or steal the January issue . . . Is it at all possible to obtain [it]? I would be so grateful since I intend to start a file.

Again congratulations; it is certainly not my usual nature to write an indorsement but—this is really exciting.

(MRS.) ANN CROCKER

Grand Rapids, Mich.

Gentlemen:

. . . Thank you most heartily for a fine, usable magazine. It is the type of magazine that has been needed for years in school-rooms all over the country. I just regret I failed to receive the first issue.

HELEN D. BEDFORD

Cape Girardeau, Mo.

♦ It is with mixed emotions that we tell friends Crocker, Bedford, and the many others who want back issues that January, February, and March are out of print.

### Hail Henry!

Dear Mr. Bollman:

Bravo! on your open letter in the March issue . . . CERAMICS MONTHLY needs your non-traditional views. More power to you.

ARTHUR V. WALDRON

North Brooklin, Me.

Dear Mr. Bollman:

You are a man after my own heart! After reading your open letter in the March, '53, issue of CERAMICS MONTHLY, I had to write and thank you for putting into words the feeling a large majority of American potters like myself have lacked the courage and opportunity to express regarding the "Holier than Thou" attitude Bernard Leach displays towards us.

As just a hobby potter, I, too, would like my voice raised in protest with yours against the condescension and, to me, humiliation of Bernard Leach's lectures and articles about our American potters, while he was a guest in our great country.

There will always be Beauty, Form, and Grace in any country at any century, past, present, or future, as long as people are born with the God-given grace to see, appreciate, and transmit it into tangible objects.

(MRS.) MARTIN O. DEABLER

Detroit, Mich.

Gentlemen:

Three cheers for Mr. Bollman and his open letter in the March issue of CERAMICS MONTHLY!

One of Webster's definitions of tradition is "ancient custom." How ancient and whose custom? One could argue therefore that all tradition stemmed from the Chinese and Egyptians and there is no English, or other "tradition," at all!

Mr. Leach seems to have great difficulty in recognizing the fact that the pots we make are not intended for tradition-conscious England or Europe at all, but for America, where a great number of us are foreign born or of foreign extraction and brought our tradition with us. Thus we are really a conglomerate of all traditions;

and that in itself should evolve an American Tradition in time, if we must have one. But I note that most of the foreign-born potters are eager to shed their European ideas and to work unhampered by limitations of custom.

It seems to me it should be possible to make a good, "honest" pot, serviceable for modern living, without regard to how our ancestors would have done it.

ANNE MARIE O'NEIL

Stinson Beach, Calif.

### Heel Henry!

Gentlemen:

Come, Mr. Bollman, admit you were a bit hasty . . . You have pitted yourself against some pretty stiff competition. Leach's opinions . . . may be unpalatable to you, but you must admit that Leach and Hamada, operating on the tradition level, have produced some of the world's best pottery . . .

GENE H. DENT

New York City

Gentlemen:

The Stuelands should be complimented for their well-written open letter which appeared in the April issue. I was particularly pleased to note it was not presented as a rebuttal to [Mr. Bollman], whose comments should not have been dignified with a reply.

NAME WITHHELD BY REQUEST

### Readers Suggest, Perkins Replies

Gentlemen:

I have greatly enjoyed the articles by Dorothy Perkins on "Free Form" in the February and March issues of CERAMICS MONTHLY. I have also enjoyed every other part of your delightful magazine. It is the type of magazine I have dreamed of and hoped some day to see throughout 27 years of teaching and directing ceramics in our public schools.

In those years of teaching both students and adults, I have used all types of design and innumerable techniques for developing them. I have used free form for many years and would like to make a suggestion that might help many of your less experienced or timid readers or those who may not wish to bother with the mess usually made using plaster.

With all due respect to Mrs. Perkins, whom I greatly admire, and to all other instructors of ceramics who teach the same method, plaster forms are not necessary . . . a clay form [works fine] . . .

WARREN H. HOSMER

Lansing, Mich.

Gentlemen:

May I commend you for publishing the excellent series of articles on the techniques and aesthetics of the free form. The author well summarizes the thoughts and feelings of many of us who work in this medium, and the examples reflect the philosophy of the discussion beautifully.

I would, however, take issue with the second article of the series which advocates the use of plaster in making a "hump" (or core) as a departure for an asymmetric form . . . I would suggest clay . . .

(MRS.) H. A. BROWN

Madison, Wis.

♦ For details on clay vs. plaster forms, see "Suggestions from Our Readers," Page 30, this issue. Mrs. Perkins' reply to the above letters follows.



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**AUTHOR'S NOTE:** The generous sharing of ideas and methods by Mrs. Brown and Mr. Hosmer is heartening.

I agree with the above writers that clay may be used as they have described. Article II of my series on "Free Form" expresses the fact that there are many ways of approaching the execution of a free form, and that the two methods given in some detail—pressing clay into a plaster form and over a plaster form—are but two of many.

The subject of using clay humps, as opposed to plaster humps, has arisen. This brings out a point—the use of plaster—which has long been an area of contention among potters. It is unfortunate indeed, to my way of thinking, that plaster has been relegated to its present position by some individual potters and by many schools throughout the country. The forces which have placed plaster in low esteem are, I believe, three-fold:

1. Plaster is used in the industrial production of pottery and is therefore belittled as a *creative material* and as an aid in producing a *creative end-product*.
2. Simple drain cast forms often do not have the qualities desired by the artist. There are, however, other forms of casting that allow for unlimited creativity. That "one of a kind" is "fine art" and that anything else is mass production does not fit into our civilization or time. To live exclusively with the art methods of the past is to overlook the advancements which are part of our culture. Upon the objection of "commerciality" many ceramic juries reject cast ware. Are such rejections purely rejection of the use of plaster, or is creativity lacking in the artists?
3. The prevailing attitude against plaster has also been fostered through the mistaken belief that plaster work is inevitably messy—which it need not be.

Not only is plaster a material which may be used creatively in itself, but its use in the making of ceramic articles is a reality of our present-day world. It may seem that I am speaking over-emphatically about this matter, but it is a subject on which I feel very strongly. I desire to make my view clear. Many of my future articles which will appear in CERAMICS MONTHLY will deal with plaster and its uses for the potter, in working creatively with the material.

—DOROTHY W. PERKINS

## In Hot Water

Dear Mr. Carey:

I read with interest your article "Prepare Your Clay" which appeared in the March issue of CERAMICS MONTHLY. I wonder if you have ever used *hot water* for the mixing process? I find it really breaks up the clay and doesn't seem to do it any harm. . . .

LYNN WARREN

Niagara Falls, N. Y.

♦ Mr. Carey advises that he knows of and approves the "hot water method." In his article he strove to present a general procedure which could be used without any special equipment such as blungers, plaster bats, and even hot water. For details on the hot water procedure, see "Suggestions From Our Readers," Page 31.

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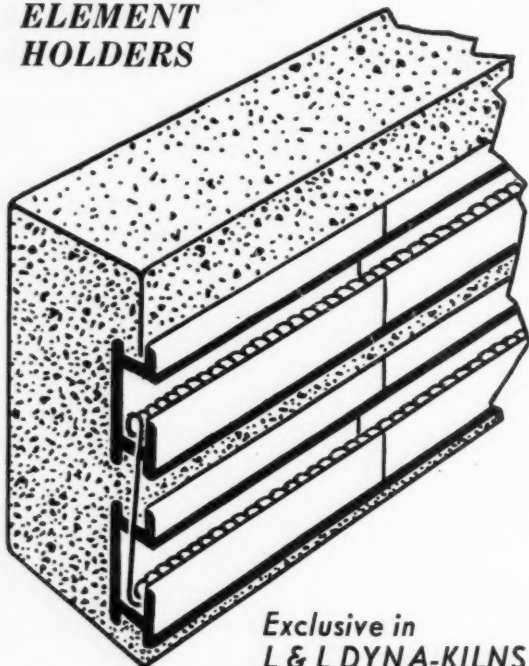
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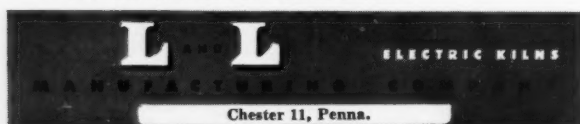
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CERAMICS MONTHLY

# Ceramics

## MONTHLY

Volume 1, Number 5

MAY • 1953

45 cents per copy

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### a letter from the editor

#### Dear Reader

We've received a large number of letters during the last couple of months commenting on the material appearing in our pages. Some of the correspondents have taken issue with what we or our authors have to say. However, most of the dissenters have taken a healthy, constructive approach. Instead of merely complaining or sitting silently back with an "I know different" attitude, they've submitted their own thoughtfully prepared ideas, enabling us to present another point of view to our readers.

Their openness is wholesome and refreshing.

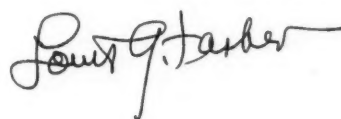
On the whole, secrecy is as prevalent today as sorcery was during colonial days. And we regard it in much the same repugnant light. Secrecy is practiced not only among professional ceramists but also at the beginning level, where it hurts the most. Too many "teachers" of hobby classes willfully withhold information from their beginning students to keep them coming back!

Perhaps it's time the ceramic art field took a lesson from the fields of science. Scientists learned long ago that it is far more profitable to share "secrets." Their meeting ground was a publication devoted exclusively to their needs.

In a recent letter, Dorothy Perkins, teacher and a "Ceramics Monthly" Contributing Editor, made the following statement that pretty well sums up our thoughts: "That ideas and differences of opinions and methods are brought into the open is, I feel, a strong indication that 'Ceramics Monthly' is proving itself. The free interchange of ideas and opinions can lead only to the further advancement of our field and is a refreshing change from the older, secretive attitudes which have so often deterred advancement in the creative fields."

If "Ceramics Monthly" can help to promote the "declassification of secret information" (to borrow a Government phrase), we will indeed be proud.

Yours sincerely,





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## itinerary

address notices of ceramic group meetings and shows to Itinerary Editor, Ceramics Monthly, 3494 N. High St., Columbus, Ohio

### WHERE TO SHOW

#### CALIFORNIA, Sacramento

May 20-June 28

The Kingsley Art Club's annual exhibition, to be at Crocker Art Gallery, will include sculpture and crafts. For residents of the Central Valleys. No fee; prizes. Send entries and work May 8-9. For details contact Mrs. George C. Brett, 2757 Curtis Way.

#### COLORADO, Denver

June 15-August 2

Ceramists west of Mississippi, Illinois, and Wisconsin may enter the 59th Annual Exhibition of the Denver Art Museum, Schleier Galleries. Fee is \$1; purchase prizes. Entry cards and work due May 23. Send to the Denver Art Museum, 1343 Acoma St.

#### CONNECTICUT, Norwalk

June 12-July 6

Residents or natives of New England may compete in the Silvermine Guild of Artists All New England Show. Sculpture accepted. Fee is \$3; cash prizes given. Entry cards and work due May 18. For further information contact Chairman Revington Arthur.

#### FLORIDA, Sarasota

June 29-July 26

The Sarasota Summer Festival of the Arts will include a craft show. Tool and equipment awards, as well as \$750 in cash, to be given.

#### Coral Gables

June 15-July 15

A competitive exhibition will be presented at Lowe Gallery, University of Miami. Sponsored by the Ceramic League of Miami. Pottery, porcelain, sculpture, and enamels accepted. Purchase and cash prizes to be announced. For entry information write Mrs. Juanita May, 1953 Tiger Tail Ave., Miami.

#### MASSACHUSETTS, Boston

June 7-14

All New England artists—summer residents included—eligible to enter the Second Annual Boston Art Festival, to be held at the Public Gardens. No fee. Prizes to be awarded. For information regarding entries, contact the Boston Art Festival Committee, 38 Newbury St.

### WHERE TO GO

#### CALIFORNIA, Claremont

Through May 14

The 10th Annual Invitational Ceramic Exhibition of the West Coast will be held at the Scripps College campus. Indoor and outdoor garden sculpture, architectural ceramics, and special containers for flower arrangements will be displayed.

#### FLORIDA, Tallahassee

Through May 24

Exhibition of the 17th Ceramic National circuit show. At Florida State University.

#### ILLINOIS, Chicago

May 19

The May meeting of the Chicago Potters Guild will be held at the Palmer House at 7:30 P.M. Several films about pottery, pottery making, and materials will be shown.

#### Chicago

Current

"Good Design" show. At the Chicago Merchandise Mart.

#### INDIANA, Indianapolis

May 17-June 14

The Second Biennial Indiana Ceramic Exhibition, at the John Herron Art Museum, Pennsylvania & 16th Sts. Open to Indiana amateurs and professionals, the show will include vases, bowls, table ware, decorative plaques, ceramic sculpture, and enamel on metal.

#### KANSAS, Wichita

Through May 11

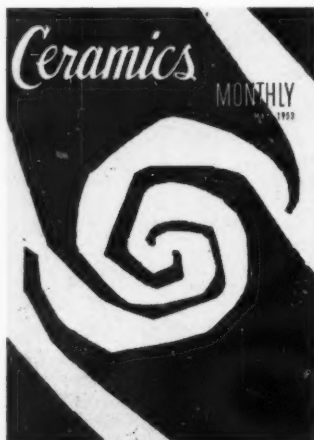
For living American craftsmen, the Eighth National Decorative Art Ceramics Exhibition at the Art Association Galleries. Ceramics, enamels, and glass on display.

#### MASSACHUSETTS, Lincoln

Through May 10

A show entitled "Massachusetts Crafts Today," sponsored by the state's Association of Handicraft Groups, is at

(Please turn to Page 32)



OUR COVER this month, by Gordon Keith, brings to the fore the spiral decoration, much used by the Southwest Indians. See Page 17!



# new & useful

"A GLOSSARY of Ceramic Terms" has been published by the Newark Museum, Newark, N. J., in connection with its current exhibition "An Introduction to Ceramics." The 13-page booklet is particularly useful to ceramists who wish brief discussions of types of ware, equipment, and procedures used in the ceramic art and craft field. Individual copies of the Glossary may be obtained at a cost of 35 cents, plus postage, by writing the Museum.

## PORCELAIN CASTING SLIP

having exceptionally high translucency (see cut) and sag resistance has just been introduced by Roder Ceramic Studio, 1828 Arch St., Philadelphia, Pa. Called Belleek slip, it fires to maturity at cone 6.

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# FAENZA

**PRISCILLA M. PORTER** visits Faenza, Italy, home of Faience ware. For the summer traveler, an article (and a place) not to be missed.



**G**OING abroad this summer? Any one interested in ceramics who goes to Italy should not miss seeing the International Museum of Ceramics and the School of Ceramic Art in Faenza. The town can be reached from many different points in Italy, but the trip from Florence to Faenza is a particularly lovely one. It winds up and down through the hills of Tuscany and Emilia.

The town is small, busy, provincial, with the usual open square in front of its cathedral, and the almost equally usual market close by, where everything from shoes and pottery to cheeses and vegetables is sold.

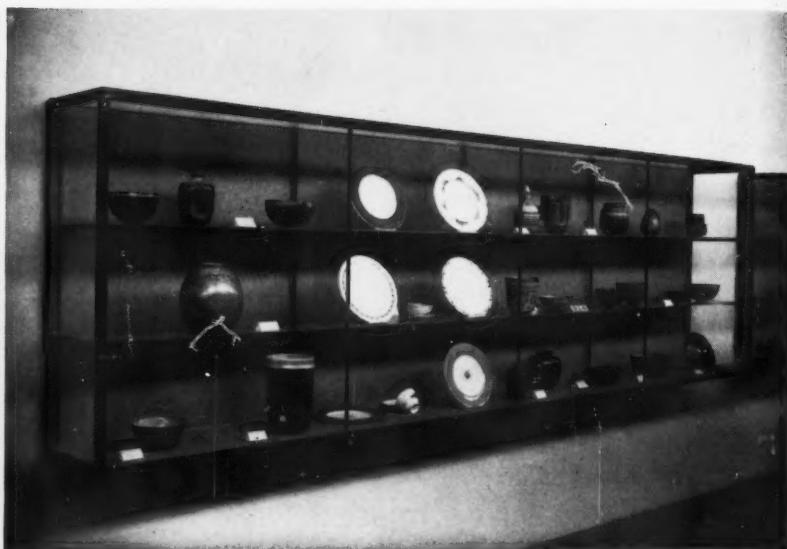
In one corner of this town are the institutions. Their purposes are directly allied. The name the International Museum of Ceramics rings rather modern; but the reason for it is, after all, very old. The well-known colored glazed earthenware known as "faience" has been made in Faenza (which means faience in Italian) for hundreds of years. The method used in making it soon became known, and was adopted in many countries of the world where its origin is still remembered. In Danish it is "fajance," in French "faience," in Spanish "faenza," in Russian "faiens," in Finnish "fajanssi," and in Turkish "fayans."

The Museum was begun in 1908 and Dr. Gaetano Ballardini, who was its first director, is still in charge. Its growth has been steady but not without many difficulties. The Museum was hit by bombs in May, 1944, which destroyed many objects in the collection and much of the contents of the library including many of the valuable photographs.

Nevertheless, the Museum has now in great part been rebuilt, and though at least two ells have not been finished, much of the surviving collection is again there to be enjoyed and studied.

**QUAINT**—and also well-stocked—is the ceramic library in the reconstructed wing of the Museum, where a large collection of ceramic literature is available. Below: work is in progress on the ell damaged by bombs in World War II.





COLLECTIONS in the Museum include an extensive array of Far Eastern ware (left) as well as a display of contemporary American ceramics. Represented in the latter are such prominent American potters as the Scheiers of New Hampshire and the Natzlers of California.

The Museum's collection is remarkably complete and varied, showing pieces from the time of ancient Egypt, Greece, and Rome to present-day pottery from almost every country of the world, including many of the now "Iron Curtain" countries. It includes not only true earthenware, of the type made in Faenza, but also stoneware, porcelain, and commercial ware such as is made at Limoges or Ginori. The United States is represented by work of the Natzlers, the Scheiers, and Beatrice Wood, among the individual potters; and from the large potteries—Limoges and Rookwood.

**THE WORK** of the School of Ceramic Art is equally notable. It was started in 1913 as a place where children could be trained in the very old and noble art of pottery so that they might, upon graduation, be ready to get work in that field. The School is the only one in Italy that gives training in both ceramic engineering and in pottery as an art.

The children start at the age of 10 or 11 and for three years they have a course of general studies in pottery. They learn to throw on the wheel, prepare the clay, and other basic work. At the same time, they continue their regular school work in literature, geography, history, and other necessary school subjects. At the end of the three years, they must decide whether they wish to concentrate on ceramic engineering or become an "art" potter.

Having decided, again there is a three-year period when the students specialize in one of the two fields as well as continuing with their general school studies. At the end of this

second three-year period there is a further period of two years of "perfection studies" in the field they have chosen. So by the time they are 18 or 19 they are master potters and are ready to set up shop for themselves, to be employed by one of the many "fabbricas," or to work for a ceramic engineering firm.

It is rare that any student who has taken the course shows the least inclination to leave it. This is perhaps due not only to the long training but also largely to the fact that working in clay is one of the most generally appealing and satisfying of the arts.

The school contains many laboratories for studying the physical and chemical properties of clays and glazes. There are workrooms for the making of the pottery, the decorating of it and for the making of molds. They have nine kick wheels, the two electric wheels being used only for turning the pots, and for finishing the plaster molds.

The kiln room contains six kilns. Two of them are very large, each with two chambers, the top one for bisque and the bottom for glazed ware. These are both fired with wood. They have a small circular kiln which is also fired with wood, and is used for reduction work. When asked what they used to create the smoke inside the kiln, which is necessary for reduction, they replied that they used the parings of horses' hoofs, which produced very good smoke! In addition to these they have two modern electric kilns.

The clay there as in most other potteries throughout Italy, is found locally. In many cases it is so pure that hardly any preparation of it is needed. The clay from Faenza, when it has been

fired to approximately 900 degrees Centigrade (cone 010), comes out a light pinkish-beige color. It is then ready to be glazed and, if needed, majolica decoration applied.

**BESIDES** the great and good work done by the Museum and School, Dr. Ballardini has set himself another task which he has also fulfilled admirably. This is the publishing of a magazine called *Faenza*. It contains articles always of interest to the potter, from many lands, and in various languages. The magazine includes an English summary of all its foreign language articles. It is certainly a truly international undertaking.

On my late visit to this unusual international institution, I was very deeply impressed by this fidelity to an ideal. The kindness and generosity of those I met who are connected with the Museum and School were outstanding. They took many hours of their valuable time showing me everything they supposed might interest me, and answering patiently all my innumerable questions.

I'm sure the people at the International Museum of Ceramics and at the School of Ceramic Art in Faenza would welcome other sojourners from America who wish to learn more of European ceramics. They, in turn, will wish to hear more of American ceramics. ●

A member of the "Greenwich House Potters" for several years, Miss Porter this year became Instructor of Ceramics in the Peoples Art Center at the Museum of Modern Art, New York City.



know your equipment and you will enjoy it longer. this is especially true

## about KILNS

by KENNETH E. SMITH

**A**LTHOUGH the kiln is one of the most vital pieces of equipment in a ceramic department or hobby or professional studio, it is often abused and misused and given the least care. Whether your kiln is large or small, electric, gas or oil fired, many extra years of service can be had if the kiln is better understood and treated with proper respect.

One of the first important items to consider is the size and type of kiln best suited for the purpose. Consideration should be given to the maximum temperature limitations, the type of ware to be made, the number of individuals who will be making ware to be fired, and whether or not custom firing will be done. While a kiln with a small firing space is quite adequate for test work and for the learning process, one such kiln soon becomes too small for a group of workers, or even one prolific hobby potter. In short, the first step in attaining long kiln life is to get the right kiln for the job.

Once the right kiln is obtained, and before it is put into service for the first time, the tops of all shelves should be covered with a heavy coat of kiln wash. This is a mixture of refractory materials (usually potter's flint and kaolin) which will adhere to the shelf, but will never fuse. Thus, kiln

wash protects the shelves from glaze drippings.

The floor of the kiln should be protected by a set of shelves, so that it does not become uneven. In an electric kiln, with elements in the bottom, this false floor should be raised off the heating elements at least one-half inch. This is to allow for good circulation of heat from the bottom elements. If the kiln bottom does not contain elements, bisque ware may be set directly on the floor; however, glazed ware should be placed on removable shelves.

**S**TACKING the kiln with ware requires some thought and knowledge as well as plain common sense. Naturally, the kiln should be stacked

as economically as possible, so that the greatest number of pieces can be fired each time. If a little more space than usual is left between the pieces, it is quite possible to fire bisque and glazed ware together. It might even be advisable to separate the bisque from the glazed ware by setting them on different shelves. Incidentally, some kilns are found to be cooler in the top. If you find this condition in your kiln, you can take advantage of it by using the cooler areas for bisque ware or for some glazes which may need less heat than others.

Care should be taken to prevent the ware from ever touching the heating elements in any electric kiln, or from touching the muffle walls or tubes in an oil or gas kiln. These are the hottest areas in any kiln and may result in uneven hardness in a piece of ware. If the ware happens to be glazed, the glaze will, of course, adhere to the kiln at the point of contact and, aside from ruining the piece, the kiln easily can be damaged.

The initial firings in any kiln must be more or less experimental, since each kiln has its own idiosyncrasies. In general, a slow firing cycle is best for the ware, as well as being best for the kiln itself.

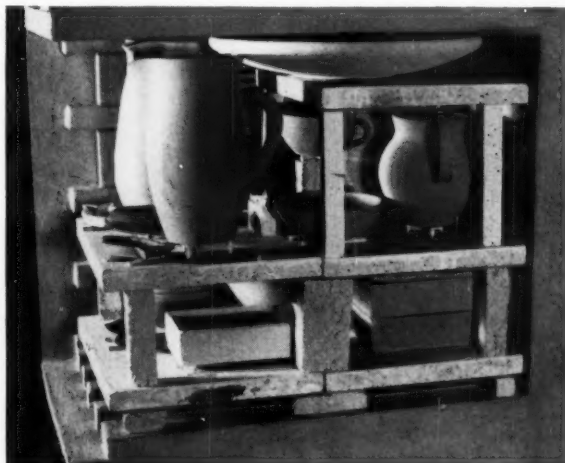
There is really no set rule as to how fast a cycle should be, since there are so many variables to consider. The size and type of kiln set the pattern.

**I**N general, be certain that the ware is bone dry before firing. The amount of ware in the kiln and the wall thicknesses of the pieces are factors to be considered in planning the heat rise cycle. For a bisque firing, the initial firing period should be slow, until the kiln glows a dull red inside, after which the heat may be allowed to rise as fast as desired until the end point is reached.

In a glaze firing, the reverse procedure is often the better policy. After

(Please turn to Page 24)

**PROPER STACKING** can assure you of properly fired ware and longer kiln life. In the cut-away kiln on the right a setting is shown where, with the aid of shelves and posts, maximum use is made of the available space. Bisque ware is set on the bottom tier, glazed ware on top. (Photos from the film "Stacking and Firing," Audio-Visual Center, Indiana University, Bloomington.)



Mr. Smith, a university teacher of ceramics during much of his career, is now Manager of the Ceramic Division, the American Art Clay Co., Indianapolis, Ind.



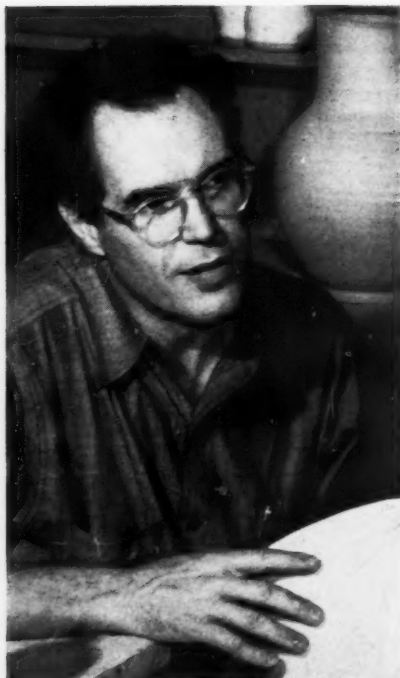
## PROFILE

# a potter

CERAMIST F. Carlton Ball once said that he knew many painters who want to decorate pottery, but not many potters who want to collaborate with them. He was aware of the many problems involved. So when painter Aaron Bohrod proposed that he and Ball join their talents into a throwing-decorating team, the latter did not immediately accept the idea.

It was in the fall of 1950 that the two artists became acquainted. Ball, then 39, had just arrived at the University of Wisconsin from Mills College, Oakland, Calif., and was encouraging the art faculty to use the pottery facilities. Bohrod, who was Artist-in-Residence at Wisconsin, immediately became enamored of the design possibilities in decorating clay forms.

"I admit," Ball remembers, "that I



F. CARLTON BALL met and formed a collaboration with Aaron Bohrod in the autumn of 1950. By that time he had made his reputation in the ceramic art field, and had acquired what his partner has called "sensitivity combined with the same serene ease in the throwing of pottery."

Ball was born April 2, 1911, in Sutter Creek, Calif., but thinks of his home town as the neighboring Jackson, Calif., a gold mining town in the Sierra Nevada Foot Hills. As a young man he studied painting, sculpture, and art education at Sacramento Junior College and at the University of Southern California. He received his A.B. degree in 1933 and his M.A. in 1934, doing graduate work in fresco painting and tempera.

The now-eminent ceramist was first introduced to ceramics in 1939 when he studied pottery, along with jewelry, at U.S.C. He found it satisfying and began teaching it in his first teaching position at the California College of Arts and Crafts, Oakland, Calif. From then on, pottery making was Ball's first interest. He initiated a course in the subject at Mills College in 1939; evenings during 1942-43 he taught at the California School of Fine Arts. He became one of the organizers of the Mills College Ceramic Guild and the San Francisco Potters Association.

Mills College was left in favor of the University of Wisconsin and Aaron Bohrod (unknown to each party, of course) in 1950. He stayed at Wisconsin for only a year, however, before moving on to his present position as head of the Ceramics Department at Southern Illinois University.

Ball has an exhibition record any ceramist would envy. In 1949, for example, he exhibited in 25 different events in the U.S. and Canada, winning six first prizes, one second, one third, one honorable mention; and he's consistently been represented in the Ceramic National since 1943.

# er & painter collaborate

thought working together might be fun." But he hesitated because, for one thing, he was not master of the materials he had to work with. Having lived and worked in California all his life, Ball found that the move to Wisconsin and the accompanying change in clays, kilns, glaze materials, and climate made it necessary to redevelop his techniques of forming, glazing, and firing.

"I hated to think of Bohrod's designs being ruined by the change in materials or a mistake in firing." He feared, too, that it would be hard for a painter to become accustomed to losing pots in the firing, as a ceramist must.

But his major mental reservation (and he is not alone among potters) concerned the way most painters decor-

ate pottery. Usually they paint pottery rather than decorate it. The small, tentative pieces Bohrod constructed and decorated in the classroom studio led Ball to believe that perhaps here was one painter who respected pottery form as such. He felt that Bohrod might possibly be that rarity among painters who could respond to a thrown shape with a kind of invention different and apart from his customary painting on canvas.

**W**ITH mutual agreement that the project would be abandoned if results were unsatisfactory or if either of the artists felt uncomfortable in the relationship, the collaboration began.

Because of Ball's hesitancy with pottery making in his new environment, the partners did their first work using the sgraffito technique, which made the

EQUESTRIENNES (upper left) were "given a home" when Carlton Ball threw the large stoneware pot to especially accommodate them. The figures are sgraffito line through iron oxide. PAINTED FISH (below) conform to the shape of the 18-inch diameter stoneware punch bowl.



Bohrod in the sensitive- of his in the sculpture university s M.A. n 1935 it satis- California making ls Col- School e Cer- in and ayed at nt posi- versity. 49, for Canada, n; and 1943.

**AARON BOHROD** is one of America's distinguished painters, besides maintaining an important role in the team of "Ball-Bohrod."

Presently he occupies the position of Artist-in-Residence at the University of Wisconsin. Surprisingly, a look at his correspondence shows (from the letterhead) that he is connected with the Department of Rural Sociology; a look at his paintings suggests why. Many of the scenes he paints are rural scenes with the exaggerated skies he loves to paint, and he does his actual teaching to groups of rural artists out in the state.

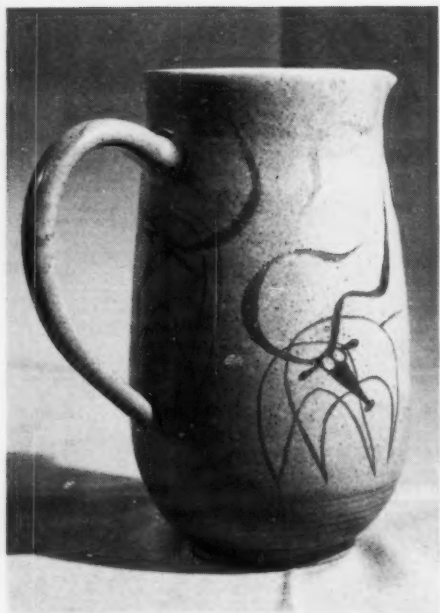
Chicago-born, Bohrod studied at the city's Art Institute and Crane College, later at the Art Student's League of New York. He painted Chicago street scenes through the late 1930s and in 1942 took the post of Artist-in-Residence at Southern Illinois University (where coincidentally Carlton Ball is now head of the Ceramics Department.)

He had only about a year to paint scenes around Carbondale and the coal mining regions of southern Illinois, because World War II offered a radical change in scenery. First he went as a war artist-correspondent to the South Pacific. Later "Life" Magazine assigned him to Germany and France, and during his year in Europe he brought forth a series of war pictures which "Life" reproduced. The 45-year-old artist has had his work published in "Time," "Life," "Fortune," "Coronet," and "Esquire," as well as in the major art periodicals.

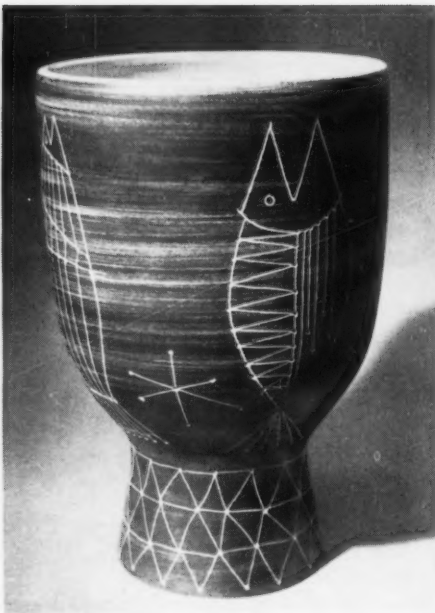
He holds many awards, among them eight from the Chicago Art Institute, the \$1500 Clark Prize from the Corcoran Gallery of Art, and a \$1000 prize in the Artists for Victory Exhibit at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. He has also won two Guggenheim Fellowships and was one of five Americans to exhibit at the Carnegie International Art Exhibition.







**FLOWING HORNS** of yak-like animal play about the handle and spout of this pitcher. A thick and thin black oxide line produced a "stoneware variation" of majolica in this subtly toned pot.



**TELEVISION LAMP** of stoneware makes a welcome home for some of the fish in the sketchbook. Sgraffito decoration cut through a manganese dioxide polished but unglazed surface.



**HOVERING** dangerously close to pictures on a pot, the sgraffito and area scraped clowns are perhaps saved by the all-over feeling of evenly weighted but varied relationships.

ceramist's job easier and at the same time limited Bohrod to a line design. It was a good introduction to the problems confronting them. As with all of the more than 200 pieces they have created in their work together, each of their efforts was wheel thrown, high-fired stoneware.

They found as they progressed that two basic procedures evolved, which they still alternate. "Carl would throw any shapes that occurred to him," Bohrod recounts. "Afterward I would draw a profile of the shape and study out a number of different ways of decorating the surface so it would best suit the pot."

Now when the two begin a work session (summers only, because Ball has since gone to Southern Illinois University to take charge of the Ceramics Department), Ball inspects the new drawings Bohrod has sketched. Then he furnishes the forms demanded by the indicated decoration. But even now much of their work begins with Ball's inventive shapes.

Working with Ball disclosed to the painter a "talent" for design he never knew he had. More and more projects have gone into his sketch books, which have become a proving ground. They employ and reject many ideas that have appeared in the form of drawings.

In the collaboration Ball and Bohrod have assumed mutual veto powers so that while pet individual projects have not materialized because of the unwillingness of one of the partners to go

along, the works they have put out bear the approval of both.

Sometimes they feel a little frustrated at not being able to work together at will. But when the partners do get together they drive with a lot of special stored up energy for as long as 14 hours a day over a several week period.

**T**HEIR work together as a team has, of course, crystallized their ideas about each's role in the collaboration. Says Bohrod: "My drawing pages (and indeed our pottery) may puzzle people in that there are so many varying design impulses explored. But pottery—while one can be deadly serious about standards of beauty—can still be a playful, lighthearted art. I feel that almost anything goes, if the pot 'goes' with it."

On the other side, Ball is continuing the principle of throwing he learned from Glen Lukens, his first and only teacher: let the materials first, and the tools second, dictate the shape and the beauty of the pot. Or as Ball amplifies the idea, "As the clay turns on the wheel, and gradually takes shape, ideas are suggested and dictated by the clay. If the craftsman is alert to the beauty developing under his hands and nurtures it without forcing his will and preconceived ideas, then the material will speak for itself, with the interpretation of the artist. Thus a thing of beauty is created."

By working together they have stimu-

lated each other with ideas, and in turn have come to hold a deep mutual admiration. Their opinion of each other points up even more their respective roles in the partnership.

Aaron Bohrod describes Carlton Ball as "America's top ceramic artist . . . an artist big enough that he can work with another artist; can produce specific shapes on suggestion; can persuade both in the direction of restraint and of encouragement. He is big enough that he can enthusiastically participate in the production of works which, while distinct from the pottery he creates under his single signature, bear the mark not of a split personality but of a special integrated and combined personality."

Carlton Ball once analyzed Bohrod this way: "He has ability to adjust his techniques to material. His decoration is sensitive to the form, neither destroying the shape nor setting up conflict between surface and form. He enhances the pottery and gives each object special meaning. Each pot he decorates inspires me to more and varied creation."

**T**HE co-workers are in agreement, too, about the future of their work. Ball states it for both of them, "It is fun, it is exciting, challenging, inspiring. There seem to be no personal negative results, so we will go on and look back and evaluate later, or leave that to others, if critics can ever agree. As long as we feel we are making a positive contribution that is all that is necessary." ●



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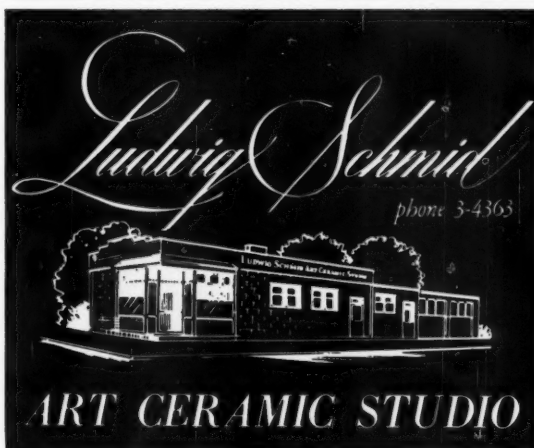
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# Southwest Indian Pottery

by WHITNEY HALSTEAD

F IRED CLAY is one of the most indestructible of man's records; pottery affords us one of the most complete accounts of the development of civilization. It shows the growth and progression of a culture and the influences upon it. Especially is this true in the American Southwest where every change in the life of the people was reflected in their pottery.

The early agricultural people of this area are known for their outstanding weaving of fine baskets until the period of pottery making, which began sometime around 500 A.D. In all probability the making of clay vessels was stimulated by contact with the Mexican civilizations to the south. But in what is now the southwestern United States it developed its own individual form and design, distinctly different from that of any other area.

The Southwest on a basis of present archeological evidence is divided into three more or less distinct culture areas—Mogollon, Hohokam, Anasazi. All three areas were dependent on agriculture, primarily the growing of corn, and the Indians lived in settled groups.

The Mogollon culture developed in the mountains of southwestern New Mexico and southeastern Arizona. In southcentral Arizona the Hohokam people lived, farming the desert by means of a highly developed system of irri-

gation. The third, the Anasazi culture, also known as the Pueblo culture, developed to the north. The plateau on which it developed is to be found in the "Four Corners" region comprising parts of northeastern Arizona, northwestern New Mexico, southwestern Colorado, and southeastern Utah.

Although the Mogollon and the Hohokam cultures were very similar in many ways, each developed distinct types of pottery. The bowl shown in Figure 1 is an excellent example of the Hohokam pottery. The use of spiral and zig-zag forms is most common, but recognizable animal forms are also found in the designs painted on the vessels. The most outstanding and best-known use of such subjects as animals, insects, plants, and human forms is to be found in the pottery from the Mimbres area of the Mogollon culture. Examples are shown in Figures 2 and 3. There were

mutual influences between these two cultures and the Anasazi. An example of the Anasazi pottery of this period (1050-1300 A.D.) is the polychrome bowl shown in Figure 4.

The prehistoric Hohokam and Mogollon people have been absorbed or dispersed, and there is relatively little left of their achievements. Possibly the Hohokam people are the ancestors of the Pima Indians of southwestern Arizona today.

**S**UCH is not true of the Anasazis who produced equally fine pottery and the most outstanding architecture north of Mexico, for we can see their culture and their descendants living today on the Hopi mesas, in Zuni and Acoma and in the pueblos along the Rio Grande. (A pueblo is a town or village having the houses built together, like a huge apartment house. They are made from stone and adobe brick.)

Cliff Palace in Mesa Verde National Park, Colorado, shown in the illustration on top of Page 17, is an example of the community dwellings built by these people during the Great Pueblo period which extended roughly from 1050 to 1300 A.D. This cultural climax was also the finest period in pottery making. Several of the pieces of ware from this period are shown on Page 19.

The prehistoric potters used only a few basic three-dimensional forms which consisted mainly of variations in bowls, jars, mugs, and ladle forms such as those shown on Page 19. They also developed, however, some unusual forms which were sculptural in feeling. These were effigy vessels which often suggested bird forms or sometimes were quite realistic. These were often called "eccentric" shapes, and several examples will be found on top of Page 20.

The decline of the Great Pueblo period, which started in the 14th Century, was accelerated by the Spanish conquest, begun in 1540. From this time on the Pueblo people lived under the influences and pressures from Western civilization. Although pottery making continued, as did almost all their traditions, it is with some exceptions not so fine as that made during the period of the Great Pueblos.

**M**OST important, however, is the fact that pottery did not entirely cease to be made. At the beginning of the 20th Century the tradition\* was vigorous enough to revive, and fine pottery is again being made by the Hopis

\*The tradition was so strong, in fact, that the same pottery making techniques are in use today as those employed in prehistoric times. Although variations occur, the method for Pueblo pottery making today is essentially the following:

The clay is kneaded (comparable to our wedging), and is then mixed with a tempering material (grog) such as sand, fired clay, or vegetable fiber.

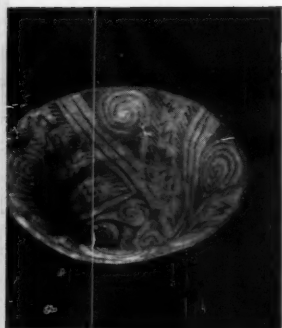
For the forming process the coil building method is used almost exclusively. The vessel begins from a saucer-like base to which the coil, usually very small in diameter, is attached and spiraled upward. The walls are smoothed.

After forming, the piece is normally completely coated with slip, which is usually a clay finely dispersed in water. The surface is then polished before it is completely dry with a hard, smooth stone. The decorations are painted on with a syrup made from a local plant called gauco. The syrup is made by boiling the plant in water, allowing it to harden into a sticky mass, and then storing it for sometimes as long as a year before using.

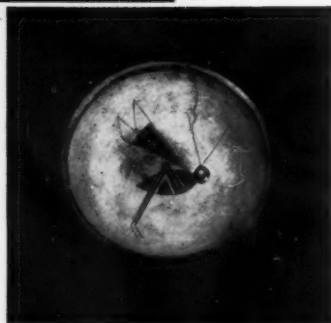
Firing is done in the open rather than in kilns with fuel of pinon wood and dung heaped up around the vessels. This produces a reducing atmosphere, which is necessary to develop the black color in the gauco glaze. The firing temperature will usually reach cone 010.

REPRESENTATIVE pottery of the three culture areas are the Hohokam bowl with its spiral and zig-zag decoration, the Mogollon bowls decorated with insect motifs, and the Anasazi bowl with its prominent terrace decoration.

1. Red on buff bowl, 900-1100 A.D., Hohokam. 2, 3. Black on white bowls, 1050-1200 A.D., Mogollon-Mimbres. 4. Polychrome bowl, 1250-1325 A.D., Cibola area, Anasazi.



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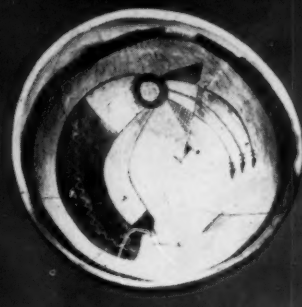


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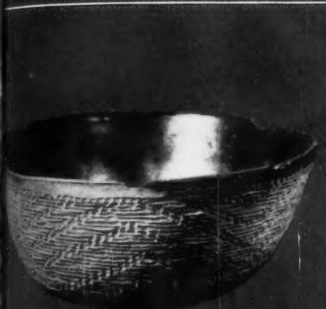


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10.

THE ANASAZI culture has survived, whereas the other early ones have perished. Examples of the early Anasazi pottery are shown on this page. Utilitarian vessels such as plates and bowls, drinking mugs, and ladles were the most common. Shown at right is another common form, a pitcher decorated with the much-used spiral decoration.

5. Glaze decorated bowl, 1550-1565, Rio Grande Area. 6. Sikyatki polychrome bowl, 1400-1625 A.D., Kayenta area. 7. Jeddito black on yellow bowl, 1325-1600 A.D., Kayenta area. 8. Corrugated bowl, 1100-1200, Cibola area. 9. Black on white mug, 900-1000 A.D., Mesa Verde area. 10. Black on white ladles, 1100-1200 A.D., Cibola and Chaco areas.



and in the Rio Grande pueblos. The finest of these contemporary potters like Nampeyo, the Hopi woman of Hano, and Maria and the late Julian Martinez, of San Ildefonso, have studied the prehistoric examples, and their work is a development and continuation of the tradition. (Maria Martinez is shown working on her pottery on Page 17.) So continuous has this tradition been that contemporary potters use shapes and decorations which have been in use for centuries. For example, the terrace or step motif used in painting and weaving as well as in pottery is explained by the present-day pueblo dweller to symbolize clouds and/or mountains. These are subjects which figure prominently in the pueblo ceremonial life. The mountains stand for the home of the gods and the clouds portend rain and water.

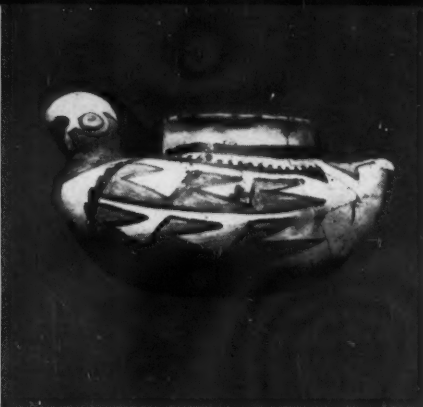
Photos through the courtesy of the Chicago Natural History Museum and the Palace of the Governors, Santa Fe, New Mexico.

which are so important to living in this region.

So many aspects of pueblo life seem to have remained essentially unchanged that it is likely that the terrace design such as we see on the mug from Mesa Verde (Figure 9), and on the modern plate made by Maria and Julian, (Figure 16), symbolizes the mountains and clouds.

The plate is typical of the black mat-glossy ware which Maria and Julian have made famous. It is considered their own unique achievement, but a somewhat similar use of mat and glossy surface can be seen in a prehistoric example (Figure 8). It is an example of the corrugated ware in which the small coils of clay that build up the vessel are left unsmoothed; and, as in this example, indentations form the design pattern. The interior received a careful polishing obtained by rubbing the unfired clay with a polishing stone. Another variation in mat and glossy surface texture can be

11.  
12.  
13.



EFFIGY vessels were also a familiar pottery form. They were sculptural in feeling, and often were quite like birds.

11. Effigy vessel, 850-950 A.D., Chaco Canyon area. 12. Sikyatki polychrome parrot effigy bowl, 1400-1625 A.D., Kayenta area. 13. Black on white jar, 1100-1200 A.D., Cibola area.

14.  
15.



MODERN pottery still follows the early traditions of design, decoration, and even the forming and firing processes.

14. Bowl by Nampeyo of Hano (modern Hopi), who bases many of her sophisticated decorations on those of her ancestors (see Figures 6 and 7). 15. The popular "ollas" jar with its wide shoulder and narrow mouth (modern Acoma). 16. Black on black plate by Maria and Julian Martinez of San Ildefonso (modern Rio Grande). According to Julian's description, the cornfield is in the center with the mountains around it.

16.



seen in some of the glazed ware such as that shown in Figure 5. There are no examples of Southwest pottery in which glaze was used over the entire surface. But at one period glaze paint was used for the design on the unfinished surface of the vessel.

THE jars we see most frequently today with their wide shoulder and narrowed mouth (they're sometimes referred to as *ollas*) are a post-Spanish form which seems to have become popular after the 16th Century. The jar from Acoma (Figure 15) and a jar from Zuni (facing Page 17) show the fine proportions which have been developed and also the subtle variations in shape as well as design from pueblo to pueblo. The stylized plant and animal motifs on

Mr. Halstead teaches in the History of Art Department, School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

the Acoma jar and on pottery by Maria and Julian are a modern development in design in the Rio Grande area. Such stylization and abstraction of natural forms occurred more frequently in the Hopi area (Figures 6 and 7). These are examples of the pre-historic Sikyatki and Jeddito wares which were the models on which Nampeyo based her meticulous and sophisticated forms and designs as shown by her bowl in Figure 14.

In the story of the Southwest the past and the present merge, and there is no break in the traditions of the culture. The beautiful pottery which was produced in the pre-historic pueblos and by the Hohokam and Mogollon peoples is being equalled today. The customs and traditions of the pueblos kept alive and vigorous have been responsible for their survival as a culture group. Pottery has played its part and is a tradition that is alive and growing. ●

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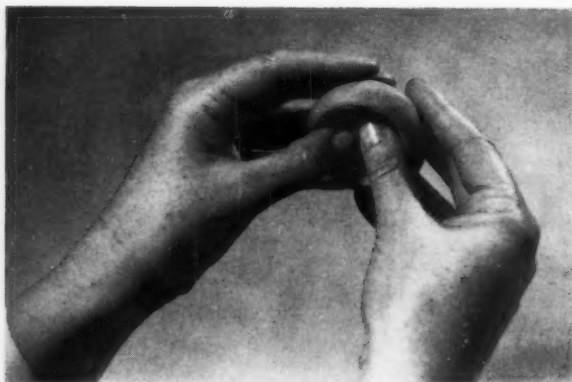


*Photos courtesy Los Angeles City Schools*

for the classroom  
bulletin board—

# PINCH POTS

by RUTH H. JOHNSON



**T**HE TRUE potter likes the feel of clay in his hands. Its tactile quality, its plasticity, make it a true medium for the direct expression of creative ideas. Pick up a lump of clay, handle it, roll it between the fingers—see what it will do.

The most primitive method of building a pot is by hand and finger pressure alone. Start with a small lump of clay. Roll it between the hands until a perfect ball is formed. Now, holding it in the palm of your left hand, press your right thumb in the center and rotate the ball until it begins to shape into a small bowl form. Continue rotating clay, with thumbs in the hollow, using no tools but your fingers, until the walls of the bowl shape up evenly. Try to keep sides even and not less than three-eighths inch thick.

With sensitivity of handling, the clay will respond to pressure; it will grow into any simple planned form. Try fluting the edges with thumbs or fingers, or tapping the sides on the table, or pressing the edges with a notched stick or tool. But, above all, keep it simple.

You'll have a primitive piece of pottery, but an honest, direct expression in clay. ●

.....  
*Miss Johnson teaches ceramics in the  
Los Angeles City School System.*





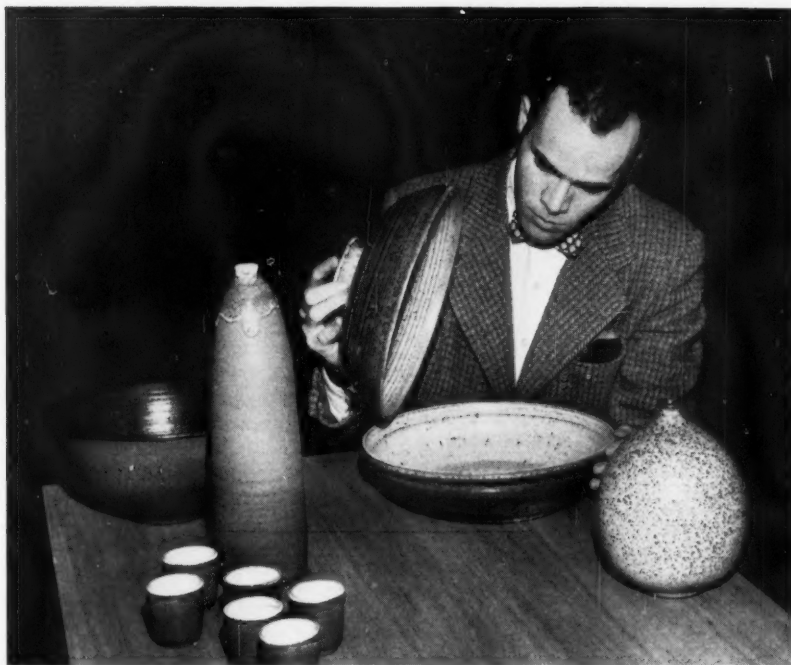
# Show Time

## Northwest Exhibition: A Case History—

When you've finished an especially trying experience, it's human nature to want to sit down and chat about it, criticizing and evaluating the procedures used and results obtained. We've caught Gervais Reed, shown above, Curator of the Henry Gallery at the University of Washington, Seattle, in such a mood. From his vantage point he's been able to give us a "from the inside looking out" view of the Northwest Craftsmen's Exhibition, just closed (March 8-April 8) at the Gallery.

Moreover, the results of the show are in. Below is a photo of one of the winning pieces, and you'll find a picture of all the winning pieces in the ceramics division on Page 33. The Exhibition,

**CRYSTALLINE JAR** by Lucille Nutt, Secretary of Seattle Clay Club. A prize winner, the piece is wheel thrown. Glaze is a zinc-silicate crystalline type, having a soft yellow background color with silvery green crystals obtained by nickel oxide.



GERVAIS REED, curator of the Henry Gallery, examining casserole by David Hatch, Eugene, Ore. Casserole is 12-inch wheel thrown piece, with an iron brown glaze. Lid may be used separately as serving bowl.

for the record, was open to craftsmen residing and working in Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, and British Columbia. More than \$500 in prizes were awarded.

Since this was the first show the sponsors (Henry Gallery, Seattle Clay Club, Lambda Rho, and the Weaver's Guild) had held, we've asked Mr. Reed to give us a brief case history of it, discussing some of the problems they got into and how they solved them. We did so with the thought in mind that his discussion might help other groups to plan similar exhibits. It will, perhaps, be a further help to the submitting craftsmen to know what goes on behind the scenes at a competitive exhibition.

Here, then, are Mr. Reed's own words on the subject:

"What prompted our decision to hold such a show? The Gallery had been having a series of uncoordinated and unrelated exhibitions of ceramics, weaving, jewelry, etc. One day the members of the local clay club suggested the possibility of holding a joint show with three interested groups. It seemed a good idea.

"We decided to have three categories of entries, ceramics, weaving, and a general class including jewelry and enamels.

"Once the responsibilities of the various groups were delegated, the first big problem was the preparation of the rules brochure and entry form, which took a lot of work. The form finally

worked out served very well, though next year we'll want to add more space on the coupons and a way of handling entrants who submit in more than one class.

"The next problem was the handling of entry fees, entry blanks, and the entries themselves. As the entry cards came in, they were filed by class, alphabetically, and given a number. When the entries themselves were opened they were tagged with this number; craftsmen's names were covered or taken off. The number also was put on the box the pieces came in. At the time the entry cards were received, two return labels were made out and filed with the card, and a form postcard acknowledging receipt and telling of the jury's decision was addressed.

"As entries were checked in, a numerical list was made out as a cross reference. Juries' decisions were recorded on the original entry blanks for the records.

"The system has worked pretty well so far. We haven't worked it in reverse yet to return the entries . . . the crucial test.

"Judging was difficult. The Gallery's interest in the show was, of course, to make the public aware of good contemporary design in craftsmanship. Each group, on the other hand, had quite specialized interests in techniques and materials, points which would probably not be apparent to the general public.

(Please turn to Page 33)

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## About Kilns

(Begin on Page 11)

the glaze has been applied, it should be dried thoroughly before firing. Although the surface of the glaze may appear dry, you should remember that the glaze particles were suspended in water, which has been absorbed by the ware on which the glaze has been applied. All of the water should be expelled in a drier before the piece is placed in the kiln.

If the ware has already been bisque fired, and the glaze coating is thoroughly dry, the heat may rise rapidly without danger to the piece. It is well to have the more gradual or slower heat rise near the end of the firing, as the glaze goes through a state of fusion until it finally becomes a glass. During this fusion, the glaze may bubble due to gases in the composition. If the fusing process is not completed at the necessary temperature, the glaze will not "settle down" and flow smoothly over the ware but may result in blisters.

Slow cooling of the kiln is equally important. In general, any kiln should be allowed to cool while tightly closed as long after the firing as the firing time. Whenever a small kiln is fired one day, it should be left closed to cool overnight. Usually it may be opened the next morning and the ware removed. Whenever the ware is cool enough to be removed with the bare hands, it is cool enough to be taken out.

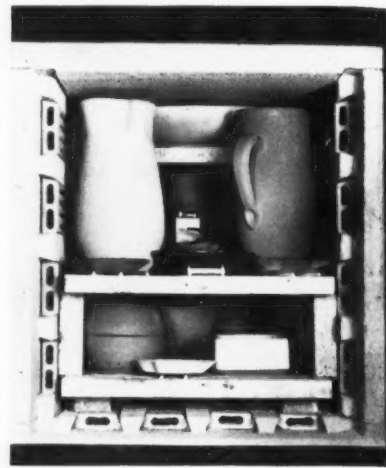
The regulation of the heat, the firing cycle, and the end point of the firing are other major items which must be considered. A kiln of any size beyond a test kiln should be regulated by heat input switches to slow down or speed up a firing, as desired. A good indicating-pyrometer is a convenience as an indication of heat rise, as well as an approximation of the end point in any firing. It is an extremely simple instrument to install on any kiln, as there is no electrical connection necessary.

The pyrometer is, at best, merely a temperature indicator and should not be considered an automatic control. Many pyrometers may vary as much as 150°F. from the temperature equivalent of cones. Pyrometers should be periodically checked with cones, so that a pattern can be made for subsequent firings.

The use of pyrometric cones for the most accurate indication of end point firing is recommended. Since the cones are made of ceramic materials quite similar to the ingredients in the ware being fired, they tell you not merely when a temperature is reached, but rather when maturity is reached. This may not be important when only an approximate temperature is required.

However, in the firing of glazes and bodies, maturity is all important. These ware should never be fired without a cone pat set in front of the "spy hole," where it can be seen easily. The cones will not only help assure you of properly fired ware, but will help prevent overfiring of your kiln.

It is wise to set additional cone pats in various places in the kiln for in-



FRONT VIEW of the same kiln setting as shown on Page 11. Note bottom shelf is well above the floor elements and that sufficient space is between ware and side elements.

spection after firing. They can give very valuable information regarding hot and cold spots in various sections of the kiln.

A KILN that is properly constructed and is installed according to the instructions of the manufacturer is safe anywhere. But make the "anywhere" convenient to the place where the work is being done. This is particularly important in teaching. If the student experiences only the making of the piece and the application of the glaze, but has no experience with stacking and firing the kiln, a great deal of the thrill and value of the learning process has been lost.

Every pottery clay body and ceramic glaze composition may differ enough to warrant trials with unimportant pieces, in order to set a pattern to follow in firing. There is no set of rules to follow in kiln firing, but intelligent experimentation will show the best method to follow in any particular case to obtain the best results.

The cost of a kiln may be the largest single outlay in equipping the school or studio at the start. But any kiln should last many years if properly cared for and intelligently used, and its initial cost can be "written off" at a small cost per firing. ●

# vignettes

**BUILDING A KILN** can be a rewarding experience if one has the necessary tools and know-how, together with a set of proved plans and the advice of someone schooled in the workings of kilns. If these are not available, it can be an undertaking full of frustration, leading to ultimate disappointment, because there are many subtleties involved in the proper construction of a kiln.

For example, in an electrical kiln the making and spacing of the heating coils must be properly done, otherwise the kiln will develop "hot spots." The spots can result in poor heat distribution, poorly fired (or completely ruined) ware, and short element life. Also, the nature and distribution of the insulation is a matter that needs thoughtful deliberation. A poorly insulated kiln not only prevents proper heat distribution, but also wastes electrical power, an expensive item.

There are many good ready-made kilns on the market, some at prices low enough to make building a homemade kiln rather pointless.

**SOAP SIZING** is necessary when making plaster molds, to prevent newly cast plaster of Paris from sticking to previously cast plaster. It is essential that the soap selected be made from potash rather than soda. The best grades of castile soap satisfy this requirement, but often it is impossible to judge what one is purchasing. The only safe procedure is to use a soap made specifically for the purpose, such as English Crown Mold Maker's soap. It is supplied in paste or liquid form by nearly all ceramic supply houses.

**WOOD-ASH GLAZES** of the Oriental potters are, at their best, quite beautiful and have inspired many American potters to experiment in their production. Some of the results are excellent, but after looking over many recipes for ash glazes developed by our ceramists, one wonders just what constitutes an ash glaze. Some recipes call for as little as ten per cent wood ash, suggesting that only a small amount of ash need be added to any glaze in order to make it an ash-glaze. Most serious potters feel, however, that no glaze should be called an ash-glaze unless its whole character and whole behavior depend upon the ash content.

**OVERGLAZE COLORS** are merely specially prepared and heavily pigmented glazes or enamels having very low melting points. They are usually mixed with an oily medium for brush application over a fired glaze surface. The ware is then refired to about cone 017, the overglaze color melting and firmly adhering itself to the glazed surface of the ware.

**AN UNDERGLAZE COLOR** is a specially prepared ceramic pigment which, as the name implies, is intended to be applied to the green or bisque body of ware before the application of glaze. In general, underglaze colors are made by firing together, at high temperatures, oxides of appropriate coloring metals with alumina, kaolin, flint, or other materials. The particular combination of ingredients is one that will give the greatest stability and resistance to attack by the glaze to be used over it.

To facilitate brush work, underglaze colors are often mixed with an oily medium such as fat oil of turpentine. A very small amount of a soft frit may also be mixed with the underglaze color, the ware being then fired sufficiently to "harden on" the color, thus permitting handling without smearing prior to the application of glaze.



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## books

**POTTERY MAKING.** By Denise K. Wren and Rosemary D. Wren; Pitman Publishing Corp., 2 W. 45th St., New York; \$3.50.

Since 1912 the authors of this thin, 140-page volume have been potters of the Oxshott Pottery, located in Oxshott, Surrey, England. The material they have included here is about processes with which they have had experience during that time.

Their book, they state, "aims at giving basic information in the traditional uses of clay and in firing to all students who wish to become master potters, teachers, museum curators, or industrial designers of pottery."

*Pottery Making* opens with a chapter telling what the potter must expect to learn to become a master potter. It then proceeds to a discussion of the clay types he may work with. Since many potters look forward to one day having a shop, there is a section that will help in deciding what to obtain—it tells of machinery, shelving, a wheel, pug-mill, dod-box, and other equipment.

The traditional forms of clay working are taken each in turn—hand building, modeling, throwing, simple casting, making tiles and molded dishes, and affixing handles and spouts.

Decorating techniques are of course gone into, including the less well-known ones of stanniferous decoration, sprigging, and feathering.

And last but not least, the authors have given considerable information on glazes, and gas and coke kilns.

## In The Works

at

"Ceramics Monthly"

**Dorothy Perkins—**

will be back—sculptural forms, solid and drain casting and bodies and glazes for free forms are in the offing.

**Aaron Bohrod—**

whose exciting decorations enhance Carlton Ball's pots (see Page 12), writes on the theories and philosophies of decorating.

**Karl Maritz—**

follows up his excellent paper on "Engobes" (February issue) with another on decorating. This one on decorating with nothing but the clay itself.

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## answers to questions

CONDUCTED BY KEN SMITH

**Q.** What causes a brown stain to appear on the surface of a (commercial) cone 010 clay? This stain appears when the clay dries and will not fire out.

**A.** A brown scum on drying may come from fine lignite present in one of the clays used in the body. It is organic matter which should completely burn out on firing, however. If it does not burn out, it is probably an impurity present in the otherwise white burning body. Iron in some form, either in the clay, water, or from the container (rust) could cause this difficulty.

**Q.** Can the prepared clay powder I use for making casting slips be used to produce a plastic clay for modeling? Would such a change interfere with the glaze ordinarily used with this clay?

**A.** A clay body specifically for casting usually will not be as plastic as those made for modeling. Also it is generally conceded that a clay used for slip casting will contain a deflocculant and, therefore, is not best used as a plastic clay for throwing or modeling. It is possible to use it, however, and there would be no effect on the performance of the glaze.

**Q.** At what temperature do Michigan and Albany slips usually vitrify? Is it possible to adjust these slip clays to make them mature at low temperatures?

**A.** Some natural clays contain enough inorganic impurities to fuse like glazes when fired to rather high temperatures. Michigan and Albany slips are the most commonly used clays for this purpose. These clays perform as glazes at about cone 8-9. Of the two, Michigan slip has been found to be the softer. In order to lower the maturing temperature of either, a lead-bearing frit could be added to the clay experimentally starting with increments of 5 per cent until the clay fused at the desired temperatures. Other fluxes might be tried such as colemanite, volcanic ash, or a soft feldspar.

**Q.** I am having difficulty with Liquid Bright Gold which invariably shows cracks or a cloudy finish. I have been firing to cone 016.

**A.** Are you sure you are using Liquid Bright Gold and not Burnished or Roman Gold? If it is a good grade of Liquid Bright Gold, the best firing temperature is cone 018. Cone 016 might be high enough to dull the gold.

If the gold cracks it indicates the glaze used underneath has crazed. Should you wish to have a bright fired gold, first use a gloss glaze which fits the body perfectly. Be certain the glazed surface is clean and dry when the gold is applied. After the design is applied, allow the

gold to dry without picking up dust from the air. Fire the gold slowly for the first hour even if you have to leave the kiln's spyhole or door open. This allows the organic medium to burn out safely. Next, proceed to the maturing temperature of cone 018 down, turn the kiln off and allow it to cool naturally.

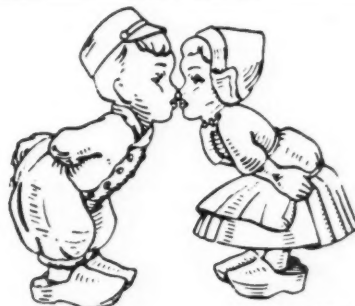
**Q.** A clear glaze which I used over an underglaze crayon decoration pitted upon firing. Can you tell me what caused this and suggest a remedy?

**A.** It is a good idea to fire the decoration before applying the cover glaze. If only fired to a dull red heat or approximately 1000°F., the colors would be set and any possible organic medium in the crayon would be burned out. This would prevent pitting which might otherwise occur during the subsequent firing of the cover glaze. It may be possible, also, that your glaze did not flow enough, or that it was a bit underfired. You might try to salvage your piece of ware by spraying on another thin coat of glaze and refiring the piece slightly higher a second time.

**Q.** My cast pieces invariably warp in both the bisque (cone 05) and glost (cone 06) firings. I use a commercial slip, and fire in a small electric kiln in about six hours. Am I casting too thin?

**A.** It could be that you are using a faulty casting slip; but, more likely, you are casting too thin. (The slip could be faulty if not enough deflocculant was used. If so, more water than necessary had to be added, which can cause warping during drying and firing.)

I suggest you: (1) be certain that the proper amount of deflocculant is being used and (2) cast a bit thicker until the desired results are obtained. Be sure, too, that you are not firing beyond the temperature recommended.



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you try hand building on

# the Banding Wheel

by GRACE ROBERTS



**I**F YOU are dissatisfied because there are bumps and irregularities in your hand built pieces, try getting symmetry into your work—all you need in the way of equipment are a banding wheel, a No. 28 steel tool, and a hat pin.

Just for practice, your first piece will be a small bowl. The first thing to do is get all your materials laid out. Wedge about two pounds of clay and shape it by hand into a cylinder approximately three inches high. Be sure the bottom is perfectly flat. Attach a dry plaster bat to the wheel in four places with wet clay.

You'll want a solid support for the right arm for making this bowl, at a height of an inch above the top of the bat. It can be a glass block, a canister, or a pile of old books.

You are now ready to center the clay

*Miss Roberts' avocation is teaching throwing at the Thurston Ceramic Studio, Columbus, Ohio. Her vocation is serving as Administrative Director of the Cerebral Palsy Treatment Center.*

on the bat. Turn the wheel with the left hand, and with the right draw a circle on the bat the size of the base of the clay cylinder. Wet the base thoroughly by rubbing several seconds with your wet hand, then center it on the bat, and pound it down hard.

Just a few pointers before you begin "throwing." Do not have the clay too moist; it will push out of shape later when you remove the inside. It's best to plan to complete the piece in one sitting, too. For once the bat has absorbed enough moisture from the clay so that the piece comes off, it is impossible to center it and make it stick. At least the piece won't adhere enough to withstand the resistance of the tool against the revolving clay.

Now to perfect the shape of the cylinder, hold a strong hat pin rigidly in the right hand, arm supported on the block, and turn the wheel counterclockwise with the left hand. Draw a circle around the inner edge of the top of the clay cylinder. (A hat pin makes a clean, sharp cut, without dragging the clay.)

Holding the hat pin rigidly and steadily, sink it gradually into the clay about three-quarters of an inch on the circle, while the left hand keeps the wheel turning. Now insert the hat pin at a right angle to the cylinder, three-quarters of an inch from the top, deep enough to meet the cut you have just made; hold it there steadily as you turn the wheel. Cut and remove the resulting strip of clay. Continue this process until you reach the bottom.

You may not have a perfect cylinder when you finish, but you will have removed surface bumps, making it easier to manipulate your cutting tool.

**N**OW THE FUN of shaping the bowl begins. Hold the straight saw-toothed edge of the tool at right angles to the clay cylinder; turn the wheel as fast, evenly, and smoothly as possible. In this way you can shape the piece from bottom to top.

You will find by experimenting that variations in the slant of your tool will produce corresponding inward and outward curves in shaping. The funda-



mental technique, however, is to use a firm, steady, solid, and strong grasp on the tool in the right hand to control and shape the clay. Don't let the tool ride on dents and protrusions on the surface of the revolving piece.

When you are satisfied with the form, it is time to level off the top of the bowl, and to dig out the inside. To perform the former operation, hold the tool horizontally on the top, as you revolve the wheel. To remove the inside, begin by holding the tool at a slant, near the center; turn the wheel, holding the right hand steady. Thus you are able to take out a small cone of clay. Use the curved end of the tool for digging out the rest of the inside to conform to the shape of the outside. Do not leave the base too thick. Shape the walls of the piece an even thickness all the way up. Do not try to take out too much thickness at once. Bevel the top edge of the bowl.

The saw-toothed marks may be left on to enhance the bowl, giving it a textured look. If you have another type of

decoration in mind, however, remove the marks from the surface. Sandpaper one of the ends of a wood tongue blade to a straight edge, rounding off the sharp corners. Hold it firmly against the bottom of your bowl; and while turning the wheel rapidly, move the blade steadily and slowly from the center outward. Using the curved end, or perhaps the side of the blade, proceed upward in the same manner on the entire inside surface.

For the outside, hold the edge of the blade carefully against the surface; and steadily following the curve of the piece, scrape off a thin layer to make the surface smooth. To finish, go over the inside and outside with a wet sponge while the wheel is in motion.

Remove the bat from the wheel, but do not attempt to remove the piece from the bat. It must dry for several hours in your damp box, and when leather hard will lift off easily.

**I**NCIDENTALLY, it's fun to really simulate thrown ware by making

finger marks on both the inside and outside of your piece. The gentle pressure of one finger moving slowly from bottom to top of the wet surface (wheel in motion) will do it. Or you can make a grooved surface by using your finger nail, or the end of a modeling tool.

You can add handles and spouts for cups, pitchers, or sugar bowls, or make fitted lids for nut bowls and cigaret jars. To make a large or tall piece, add coils by the usual hand building method, then turn each coil before adding the next.

To become expert at "throwing" on the banding wheel requires practice. But learn to be completely uninhibited and bold. If you poke your tool through the wall of a piece, patch it and go on. Experiment with different positions and slants of the tool against the clay. Above all, do not let the clay control the motion or direction of the tool; if you do you will get nowhere. The tool must be held rigidly to scrape and cut evenly—for perfect symmetry. ●



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## suggestions *from our readers*

### Clay Support

A roll or wad of facial tissue will support a sagging loop or ring of clay without marring it.

—Mrs. John Gallaway  
Indianapolis, Ind.

### Stops Leaks (?)

If a piece such as a vase seeps when water is left in it (due to a crazed glaze), fill it with sweet milk. Allow the milk to remain in the vase for about 24 hours. The milk will fill the pores and stop the leakage.

—R. A. Yoder

Waynesboro (Va.) High School  
Sounds unpalatable, but I guess it works.—Ed.

### Sandpaper: Student-Saver

Sandpaper does have its place in the ceramic studio, although many will insist that it be outlawed. I find that sandpaper is particularly important in the teaching of adult education classes.

Since the adult has turned to ceramics as a hobby, it is important that he complete some pieces without too much delay if his interest in this new venture is to be held. If a student decides a piece is too tall or that one side is too thick, he can very easily take an entire class period to work it down with a sponge. With the aid of sandpaper, the job can be completed in a few minutes.

The top of a vase, bowl, or cup can be leveled off very quickly by turning the dry ware upside down on a sheet of sandpaper and moving it in a small, circular motion.

One excellent use for sandpaper is to remove a small chip from the edge of a piece of ware. When trying this with a sponge, you find that the sponge invariably works into the chipped area and makes it deeper. You can control sandpaper so that this doesn't happen.

Of course, after using sandpaper, the ware must be gone over very carefully with a damp sponge to remove all clay-dust particles.

—J. H. Saling

Thurston Studio  
Columbus, Ohio

### Clay Vs. Plaster Forms

Forms made of plaster are not necessary for the development of free form ceramics. A clay form, built in a few minutes, covered over or lined with

damp paper towels or cloths, or allowed to dry, will avoid the mess of plaster. In addition, the method saves time and, more often than not, the inspiration of the student or hobby craftsman.

I have found also that if the clay form is allowed to dry it may be used over and over, if that is desired. It has about the same qualities of absorption as plaster, stores equally well, takes about the same amount of abuse, and at the same time produces the same exciting results, the same joy of having created something beautiful of your own.

—Warren H. Hosmer  
Lansing, Mich.

I object to plaster in making a "hump" (or core) as a departure for an asymmetric form because it is (a) unnecessary (b) time-consuming (c) a deterrent to spontaneous expression and (d) too resistant to change. As a substitute, I would suggest clay—any clay



THE PLASTER HUMP or core in question (like the one shown above) was recommended by Dorothy Perkins in her article in the "Free Form" series which appeared in the March issue of "Ceramics Monthly." For the introductory remarks by readers Hosmer and Brown and for comments by author Perkins, see "Letters," Pages 2 & 3 this issue.

which is available, but particularly "scrap" clay for which there is no other use.

The core is simply made from the clay, a piece of wet cheesecloth laid

Share your information. Suggestions, facts, and other items of interest to ceramists will be welcome to this column. Sender will be paid for each item used.





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over it, and a rolled-out slab of clay placed over both. Overnight the first impression will dry to leather hardness and can be removed; it may well be a trial impression which reveals the inconsistencies of the core, which can then be improved easily by changing a contour here, or adding a piece there. If the second impression is satisfactory, the core is allowed to dry (though it may be used as it dries). When quite hard, it absorbs water as does plaster, and the forms will therefore dry quickly.

Of course, a clay core is not so permanent as plaster, and this is a disadvantage in some respects. On the other hand, I have been able to use them numberless times—in fact, until the core itself has become so tiresome that I have been glad to throw it back into the scrap barrel—there to become another and different core.

I would especially advocate this method for beginning students.

—Audrey D. Brown

Madison, Wis.

### Clay in Hot Water

A convenient method for converting scrap clay or any dry clay to a workable plastic form is to use hot water for the mixing.

I let the clay dry thoroughly, then hammer it into small pieces, none larger than thumbnail size. I fill a large pail three-fourths full of hot (about a 180° F.) water and sift the lumpy clay into it. When the clay almost reaches the water level, I take a paddle and stir the mixture thoroughly without waiting for it to dissolve at all, as you must do with cold water. I then work this mixture through a screen using an old, but clean, three-inch paint brush, and in about 20 minutes the entire procedure is finished, and the slip is settling.

The following day I siphon off the clear water which has risen to the top.

This gives a much thinner slip than you obtain by using the cold water method (see "Prepare Your Clay," March, Page 24), and it will take longer to dry down to working consistency, but I prefer to siphon for several days than to spend time mixing the batch with the hands.

—Lynn Warren

Niagara Falls, N. Y.

### To Keep a 'Damp Box' Damp

If you have trouble keeping your "damp box" damp (mine is a \$3 refrigerator), buy half a dozen cellulose sponges, soak, and put them on the plaster floor and shelves. The box will stay moist a month or more.

—Rowena W. Atwater

Batavia, N. Y.

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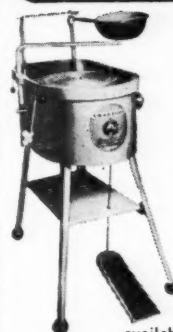
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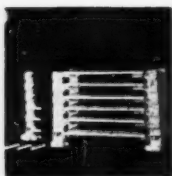
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## itinerary

(Begins on Page 6)

the de Cordova and Dana Museum  
and Park. All craftsmen in the state  
—permanent, summer, and temporary  
residents—represented.

**NEW JERSEY, Asbury Park**  
May 13-17

The Eastern Ceramic and Hobby Show  
of 1953 will be staged at Convention  
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Gasque, 77 Ridgcrest Ave., Staten  
Island, N. Y.

**NEW YORK, New York**  
May 6-14

Annual Spring Exhibition of the Craft  
Students League of the YWCA. To be  
at the Barbizon Plaza Art Gallery, 106  
Central Park South, it will include pot-  
tery, sculpture, and enamels. Open  
daily from 11 A.M. to 9 P.M. Saturday  
and Sunday 1 to 5 P.M.

**New York**  
May 10-16

The Art League of Long Island's 23rd  
Annual Spring Exhibit. Pottery, small  
sculpture. For information write Rich-  
ard Ralph, Chairman, Art League of  
Long Island, 41-17 150th St., Flushing,  
L. I.

**New York**  
Through May 10

Riverside Museum is presenting the  
Sixth Annual Exhibition of Knicker-  
bocker Artists. Sculpture shown.

**Rochester**  
May 8-June 7

The 1953 Rochester Finger Lakes Ex-  
hibit will be at Memorial Art Gallery.  
Artists and craftsmen from Monroe  
and 18 other New York counties may  
enter. Pottery and sculpture acceptable.  
Fee is \$1 and prizes will be given. For  
details write Isabel C. Herdle at the  
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**OREGON, Portland**  
May 13-June 20

The Fourth Annual Exhibit of North-  
west Ceramics. Sponsored by the Board  
of Directors of the Oregon Ceramic  
Studio. Work in pottery, sculpture, and  
enamels by ceramists in Idaho, Mon-  
tana, Oregon, and Washington to be  
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**PENNSYLVANIA, Indiana**  
Through May 26

Sculpture included in the Annual Art  
Exhibition of the Indiana State  
Teachers College. Show being put on  
by Student Cooperative Association.

**TEXAS, Beaumont**  
May 3-31

Beaumont Art Museum, 1035 Calder  
Ave., will present its second annual  
show, to which sculpture has been  
accepted. Texas, Louisiana, and Missis-  
sippi artists competing.

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Ward, S. Paul, Inc.	15
Wolfe, Jack D., Co.	31

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**EASTERN CERAMIC  
and  
HOBBY SHOW  
Convention Hall  
Asbury Park, N. J.  
May 13-17**  
attend attend



CATALOGING entries are Lucille Nutt and Gladys Crooks, officials of Seattle Clay Club. Mrs. Nutt holds a salad bowl made by her companion; it's a 9-inch piece with oyster white glaze. Other ware (left to right): dark green mat glaze tobacco jar, also by Mrs. Crooks; cream white glaze bowl, by Frances Darby, Seattle; 11-inch gray-white stoneware pitcher, by W. H. Wilbanks, Portland.

## Show Time

(Begins on Page 23)

"The problem, then, was to organize a system of judging which would satisfy all participants. Our solution was to have each group pick a three-man jury to represent them in their own class. And the gallery chose two over-all jurors to serve on all the juries as design judges.

"One thing we learned about judging was to start in the morning. Two classes were judged in the late afternoon, and both juries tended to be pretty tough. I am sure it was because three of the members had come from a day's work, and the other two had spent all morning judging other classes.

**THE CHAMPIONS.** Counterclockwise from large bowl at center right: A 14-inch stoneware with copper-red glaze, by W. H. Wilbanks, Portland; stoneware salad bowl, gray-green mat outside, dark blue inside, by E. F. Bunker, Jr., Bozeman, Mont.; 9-inch jar of textured iron brown and tan stoneware, by Frances Senska, Bozeman; 4-inch stoneware jar with soft gray-blue mat with dark brown decoration, also by Frances Senska; bowl with stone-blue mat glaze outside, gray-white

inside, by Gladys Crooks; 8-inch rice bottle with a pale blue mat glaze and iron reduction spots, Peter Voukos; crystalline jar by Lucille Nutt (see Page 23); and 12-inch casserole having an iron brown glaze. Awards, in the same order: Studio Gallery; Martin Ceramic Supply; Atelier Matts and Siri Djos; Ferro Corp.; The Potters' Award; Seattle Clay Club; American Ceramic Society, Northwest Section; and Wheel and Kiln Award.

Their patience was short and they were also in a hurry to get away. "The judging procedure we worked out operates as follows: First pick out all the obvious rejects, which tend to distract the eye. Then, before the jury gets in a completely negative frame of mind, switch over and pick out the obvious top pieces. Go over what's left carefully. Check both the 'ins' and the 'outs' for mistakes, then cull the 'ins' for prize candidates. Perhaps each juror picks one or two, depending on how many prizes there are. Then hold votes.

"In the matter of prizes, each sponsoring group was responsible for lining up prize donors in its own category. One of the problems encountered here was that there were a number of \$5 or \$10 donors, which brought up the question of whether to award the sums singly or lump prizes into one large

total that could then be redivided. The latter solution was adopted, but there was quite a bit of consternation before the final prize list was worked out. It is best to have all these things clearly in mind before things get underway. We didn't.

"Some sidelights: We had trouble getting Canadian entries across the border, and probably always will have. I suggest an early start in trying to figure this one out.

"Take plenty of time for installing the show. We took a week, and drove the last nail five minutes before opening.

"We have had some unhappy responses, too; the judging, for example. Ideas for next year include devising some system for getting the jury more closely in touch with the entrants so they will be able to see why the decisions were made. The Clay Club came to the Gallery en masse one night to go over the whole show with one of the jurors, who discussed each piece in the show. I hope we can expand on this fine idea.

"One suggestion was to tape record the jury while they were at work, then play the most interesting parts of the tape after the show opens. This might also be used as a basis for a printed summary which would be mailed to all entrants.

"Another idea involves the system of committees and delegates from each sponsoring group. This year questions had to be referred back to the parent group for consideration, which took a great deal of time. We hope next year to have a central committee with clearly delegated responsibilities to make all the decisions and handle the whole thing. This will give us some continuity, and should make things run smoother."

So there you have it . . . behind the scenes at the Northwest Craftsmen's Exhibition. Judging from the pottery work illustrating this article and the reported enthusiastic attendance, it was a fine show, and a good basis for those Northwest Craftsmen's Exhibitions to come.

## Kenmore Ceramic Guild

If the Kenmore (N.Y.) Ceramic Guild comes up to the 1,000 pieces they displayed at the annual ceramic exhibit last year, the three judges will be ascampers from 9 in the morning May 3, when entries are due, to 3 P.M., when the doors open at the YWCA on Delaware Ave.

Free to the public, the exhibit will be on display all afternoon that Sunday until 9.

The judges will have ribbons to give as first, second, and third prizes in each of 11 categories, which include about every phase of ceramics.





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